

A HAT-TRICK in just 14 minutes by Mick Holfield was the highlight of a scintillating performance by Wycombe Wanderers at Loakes Park on Saturday, when they thumped seven goals without reply against Bromley, who are now struggling at the wrong end of the Rothmans Isthmian League Division I table.

Wanderers, on the other hand, could not be happier despite their recent defeat in the F.A. Amateur Cup. In addition to picking up their eighth £40 bonus for winning by three or more clear goals, Blues delighted their home fans with some brilliant fluid football.

Holfield's hat-trick, which came between the 61st and 75th minutes, set the game alight and it was ironic that on scoring his third goal, he was immediately called off the field and replaced by Graham Mackenzie.

It was quite a match for Holfield, who just after half-time seemed about to leave the field with an injury to his right leg. But he proved his fitness with the three goals and was taken off to prevent aggravation.

Victory enabled Wycombe to go into second spot. Despite having played less games than most of the leaders, Blues have scored at least 10 goals more than any club in the league, with an average of just under three a game.

This was the third time they have notched seven in a league match this season, the other casualties being the bottom two clubs Casuals and St. Albans. But to put the result in its proper perspective, Bromley were a side desperately short of skill and know-how.

Admittedly the Kent club had the misfortune to lose centre-half John Rains just before half-time with a suspected broken ankle, but they were trailing 2-0 at the time and the floodgates seemed likely to open at any stage.

It is difficult to visualise that at one stage this season Bromley were in second place. But a 2-0

The ball, carried on by the wind, deceived Rains, who could only backhead it towards his own goal. The speedy Price beat Geoff Parsons to the loose ball and flicked it into the goal. Jim Strong's despairing dive could only help the ball on its way.

This was just the start Wycombe wanted but they nearly paid the penalty for relaxing

Horseman's flick, while 'Bodger' himself missed a good chance, by holding on to the ball just a fraction too long and allowing the Bromley defence to clear the ball away.

Price's inswinging corner was cleared off the line, while a fierce shot from the same player hit Horseman, who was standing in the way.

By MICHAEL KNOX Wycombe 7, Bromley 0

home defeat at the hands of Wycombe changed all that, and since then they have had almost as many managers as victories.

Full-back Brian Messon gave Tony Price far too much room, and the young winger, obviously revelling in the foot-perfect conditions, following the mud-bath at Chesham the previous week, showed great speed and control, although perhaps he overdid it at times.

With Dylan Evans away on amateur international duty with Wales, Tony Horseman, whose substitution did much to turn the tide at Chesham, played the full 90 minutes on Saturday. He produced several delightful through balls for his fellow forwards, even if he was not in his sharpest finishing mood.

The only other change saw Paul Birdseye replace the injured Derek Gamblin at full-back, but he had a quietly efficient game. Terry Reardon, who was expected to return to midfield had not fully recovered from a foot injury.

Blues made the best possible start imaginable with a quick goal. In the third minute Keith Mead took a free-kick deep inside his own half.

Just 60 seconds later when the visitors all but replied. A careless clearance by Mead went straight to Derek Brown, whose shot was cleared off the line by the well positioned Birdseye.

More than once during this game did Wycombe's defence get itself in a tangle, due to overcrowding as much as anything else, and a more lethal forward line than Bromley's could have taken advantage of these lapses.

In any case, Wycombe's job on this particular afternoon was to score goals and they went further ahead after nine minutes. Rains headed a clearance to the left hand corner flag. After retrieving the ball, Holfield crossed it straight to Steve Perrin who nodded past the stranded Parsons.

For the next 20 minutes, it was all Wycombe, with Price, Holfield and Perrin turning the Bromley defence first one way and then another. But a combination of missed chances and some fine play by Ray Barbeiri at the back, frustrated them time and again.

Perrin first fired wide after

But as if to bring Wycombe to their senses, the visitors, who were fighting a stern rearguard action, nearly scored. A corner by Brown on the right was not cleared, and the ball went to Moss who hit a fierce shot from 12 yards. Kevin Raine, reacting quickly, blocked it and punched the ball away at the second attempt.

Just before half-time Bromley suffered a crucial blow when centre-half Rains, following a tackle on Holfield, had to be helped off the field. He was replaced at half-time by MacRobert, while Tony Paris went back to help out in defence.

This move did not appear to affect Bromley, as for the first quarter of an hour after the interval, Wanderers rarely looked like scoring. Indeed, Wycombe appeared content to hold on to the comfort of their two-goal lead.

But it happened. As Bromley began to tire, Wanderers took full advantage and hammered in five goals in an amazing 22 minutes, with some brilliant attacking football, to which their opponents had no answer.

Perrin, who worked hard throughout the match, started it all on the hour. Price and Horseman switched the ball to the right hand side of the penalty area, where the unmarked Steve slotted home from close range.

Sixty seconds later Holfield robbed the unhappy Messon, advanced into the penalty area, from where he unleashed a fierce left foot shot which wne in off the far post, giving Parsons no chance.

This made the score 4-0, with the bonus already firmly within their grasp, but Wycombe did not relax their grip and Holfield made it 5-0 when firing home from 15 yards in the 73rd minute, after good work by Larry Pritchard, Perrin and Horseman. Parsons managed to get his fingertips to the ball but could only help it into the net.

Two minutes later Mick completed his memorable hat-trick with a close range effort after Perrin had got round the back of the defence.

With the cheers still ringing in his ears, Holfield was beckoned from the field by Brian Lee, who gave Mackenzie the chance of a run around for the last 15 minutes.

The final score came in the 82nd minute. From Blues' seventh and last corner, Roger Grant floated the ball to the far post, where Mead rose to head home his first goal for the club.

WYCOMBE: Raine; Birdseye, Grant, Mead, Bullock, Wood, Horseman, Pritchard, Perrin, Holfield (sub. Mackenzie 75 mins.), Price.

BROMLEY: Parsons, Messons, Strong, Barbeiri, Rains (sub. MacRobert 46 mins.), Springett, Paris, Davis, Walsh, Moss, Brown.

Referee: T. Baber (Ruislip Manor).

Scorers: Wycombe — Price (3 mins.), Perrin (9, 60), Holfield (61, 73, 75), Mead (82).